

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 189938
ORIGIN INR-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ARA-10 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-13 SIG-03
ISO-00 SSM-03 SS-15 L-03 OC-06 CCO-00 CIAE-00
NSC-05 DODE-00 SAA-01 /102 R

DRAFTED BY INR/RNA/NE:AAVACCARO:JVW
APPROVED BY INR/RNA: PJGRIFFIN
SSM: CWKONTOS
DESIRED DISTRIBUTION
SSM

-----108023 272148Z /15

P 272017Z JUL 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USMISSION SINAI PRIORITY
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY
USINT BAGHDAD PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY DOHA PRIORITY
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MADRID PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MANAMA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY
TREASURY DEPARTMENT WASHDC PRIORITY 0000
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI PRIORITY

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 189938

AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY SANA PRIORITY
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 189938

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: EG, IS, PINR

SUBJECT: INTSUM 615 - JULY 27, 1978

LONDON FOR KINSOLVING
PARIS FOR NICHOLAS MURPHY
OTHER ADDRESSEES FOR CHIEFS OF MISSION

WARNING NOTICE SENSITIVE SOURCES AND METHODS INVOLVED NOT
RELEASABLE TO FOREIGN NATIONALS

1. LEBANON. PRESSURES AND TENSIONS SEEM ONCE AGAIN TO
BE BUILDING TO THE POINT OF A MAJOR CONFRONTATION. ON
WEDNESDAY PRESIDENT SARKIS HELD URGENT TALKS WITH HIS
CABINET TO DISCUSS WAYS OF DEFUSING THE SITUATION.
YESTERDAY, SPORADIC SNIPING AND SCATTERED SHELLING CON-
TINUED IN THE HADETH SUBURB OF BEIRUT. EARLIER, THERE WAS
A HALT IN THE SYRIAN BOMBARDMENT OF THE AREA, WHICH WAS
DESCRIBED AS THE HEAVIEST OF THE CURRENT ROUND OF FIGHTING.

2. THERE ARE OMINOUS SIGNS THAT THE HADETH SITUATION MAY
WORSEN AND POSSIBLY ACT AS A FLASHPOINT FOR MORE VIOLENT
AND GENERALIZED FIGHTING. DESPITE SEEMING RESTRAINT BY
BOTH SIDES TO CONTAIN THE CLASHES, FIGHTING APPARENTLY
SPREAD CLOSER TO THE HEART OF EAST BEIRUT. SYRIAN
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 189938

CASUALTIES WERE SAID TO BE HIGH, A FACTOR WHICH PUTS
PRESSURE ON THE SYRIANS TO RETALIATE STRONGLY. ALSO, THE
CHRISTIANS CLAIM THAT THE SYRIANS HAVE EFFECTIVELY SUR-
ROUNDED THE AREA. AN EMBASSY DAMASCUS CONTACT REPORTED
THAT SYRIAN COMMAND AND CONTROL OF ITS UNITS IN THE
FIGHTING IS QUESTIONABLE.

3. THE CHRISTIANS, ACCORDING TO SOURCES OF OUR DEFENSE
ATTACHE, HAVE BROUGHT UP MORTARS AND ARTILLERY TO SUPPORT
THEIR MILITIAS IN HADETH AND NOW INTEND TO USE THESE HEAVY
WEAPONS IN RESPONSE TO SYRIAN USE OF THE SAME KIND OF ARMS.
A FEW CHRISTIANS IN THE LEBANESE ARMY HAVE BEGUN TO DESERT
TO JOIN THE MILITIAS, AND MORE ARE THREATENING TO DO SO.

4. MUCH WILL DEPEND ON SYRIA'S VIEWS OF WHAT ACTION IS
NECESSARY TO PURSUE ITS POLICY GOALS IN LEBANON. ASSAD
HAS OFTEN EXPRESSED FRUSTRATION OVER THE VOLATILITY OF THE
LEBANESE SCENE, SYRIA'S INABILITY TO RESTORE STABILITY,
AND THE LACK OF LEBANESE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP, ESPECIALLY
SARKIS' WEAKNESS.

5. ASSAD SEEMS UNDECIDED AS TO WHETHER SYRIAN ADF UNITS

SHOULD REACT STRONGLY TO THE CONTINUED PROVOCATIONS. WE NOTE THAT, DURING THE CIVIL WAR, THE SYRIANS SLOWLY SUBDUED THE PALESTINIANS WITH A PATTERN OF "FIGHT-THEN-NEGOTIATE," USING PERIODIC MILITARY ATTACKS TO UNDERSCORE THEIR DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS TO REIN IN THE PLO. THE RECURRENT CYCLE OF RETALIATION DIRECTED AT THE CHRISTIANS, FOLLOWED BY ROUNDS OF TALKS WITH CHRISTIAN AND OTHER LEADERS, SEEMS TO FIT THIS PATTERN.

6. FOLLOWING ANOTHER FAMILIAR STRATEGY, THE SYRIANS ARE ATTEMPTING TO DIVIDE THE CHRISTIANS, AS THEY DID THE PALESTINIANS DURING THE CIVIL WAR. THEY HAVE GIVEN CONSIDERABLE SUPPORT TO FRANJIYAH'S ELEMENTS IN THE NORTH. DAMASCUS APPEARS TO HOPE SUFFICIENT PRESSURE CAN BE PUT
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 STATE 189938

ON THE PHALANGE AND SHAMOUNISTS TO MAKE THEM BEND TO THE SYRIAN WILL. THE SYRIANS WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE TO BOMBARD THE CHRISTIANS PERIODICALLY IN THE BEIRUT AREA. MOREOVER, DAMASCUS HAS CONTINUED ITS EFFORTS TO FOSTER A POLITICAL ALLIANCE OF THOSE FACTIONS WHO DISLIKE THE PHALANGE AND THE SHAMOUNISTS, AND THE SYRIANS HAVE ATTEMPTED TO PORTRAY THE RIGHTIST MILITIAS AS RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVOKING SYRIAN ACTIONS, SO AS TO TURN THE CIVILIAN POPULATION AGAINST THE MILITIAS.

7. IT IS QUESTIONABLE, HOWEVER, WHETHER THIS SYRIAN APPROACH WILL BEAR FRUIT. THERE DOES NOT SEEM TO BE ANY EVIDENCE OF ANTI-MILITIA SENTIMENT (EXCEPT IN FRANJIYAH'S AREA). DORY SHAMOUN ASSERTED THAT THE SYRIANS HAVE, IN FACT, BOLSTERED CIVILIAN BACKING FOR THE RIGHTIST MILITIAS AND PROMPTED GREATER ANTI-SYRIAN FEELINGS. MOREOVER, THEIR SUPPORT FOR FRANJIYAH MAY WELL PROVE TO BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE, IMPACTING NEGATIVELY ON HIS STATURE AND WEAKENING HIS POSITION AMONG THE CHRISTIANS.

8. IN SOUTH LEBANON DEVELOPMENTS, MEANWHILE, UNIFIL COMMANDER GENERAL ERSKINE STATED IN PRIVATE RECENTLY THAT THE RIGHTIST MILITIAS, RATHER THAN THE PALESTINIANS, POSED THE MAIN OPERATIONAL PROBLEM TO UNIFIL. HE ESTIMATED THAT 150-180 ARMED PALESTINIANS WERE WITHIN UNIFIL'S AREA OF OPERATION, COMPARED WITH HIS ESTIMATE OF 4,000 RIGHTIST FIGHTERS. REGARDING UNIFIL'S ROLE, HE ASSERTED THAT UNIFIL HAD SUCCEEDED IN PREVENTING MAJOR COMBAT IN THE SOUTH, BUT HAD FAILED TO HELP THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT RESTORE ITS SOVEREIGNTY THERE. TO ACCOMPLISH THE LATTER, LEBANESE ARMY UNITS WOULD HAVE TO BE SENT TO THE SOUTH.
(SECRET)

9. SOUTH YEMEN. THE NEWLY FORMED REGIME IN ADEN,
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 05 STATE 189938

ADMINISTERED BY A COMMAND COUNCIL UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF FORMER PRIME MINISTER ALI NASSIR, BUT IN REALITY CONTROLLED BY NATIONAL FRONT PARTY CHAIRMAN ABD AL-FATTAH ISMAIL, IS SAID TO BE HAVING PROBLEMS CONSOLIDATING ITS POWER. IT IS DIFFICULT, HOWEVER, TO ASSESS THE DEGREE OF DISSIDENT ACTIVITY IN SOUTH YEMEN.

10. GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS IN SANA BELIEVE THAT THE ADEN GOVERNMENT HAS VIRTUALLY LOST CONTROL OF THE HINTERLAND, EXCEPT WHERE FOREIGN TROOPS ARE DEPLOYED, AND THAT PDY GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND TROOPS FROM THE GOVERNORATES BORDERING YEMEN HAVE FLED NORTH. ADDITIONALLY, TRIBAL SHAYKHS FROM THE MOUNTAINOUS BORDER REGIONS, WHICH REMAIN LOYAL TO THE FORMER PRESIDENT, ARE REPORTEDLY BARRING ENTRY OF SOUTH YEMEN FORCES INTO THE AREA. SUCH NORTH YEMENI REPORTING IS NO DOUBT BIASED AND EXAGGERATED, AND ALTHOUGH CUBAN, SOVIET, AND EAST GERMAN ADVISERS ARE IN SOUTH YEMEN, WE ARE SKEPTICAL OF REPORTS ALLEGING A LARGER FOREIGN MILITARY ROLE.

11. NEVERTHELESS, EVIDENCE DOES INDICATE LARGE-SCALE DEFECTIONS, INCLUDING SOME 700 SOUTH YEMENIS WHO HAVE REPORTEDLY DEFECTED TO THE NORTH. IN ADDITION, DEPOSED PRESIDENT ALI IS KNOWN TO HAVE HAD A POWER BASE IN THE

ARMY, AND HE WAS GENUINELY ADMIRERD AND SUPPORTED BY SOUTH YEMENI CITIZENS IN AREAS OUTSIDE ADEN.

12. IN AN ATTEMPT TO CONSOLIDATE HIS POWER BASE AND EXERT ADDITIONAL INFLUENCE OVER THE GOVERNMENT, ISMAIL CONFIRMED THE APPOINTMENT OF ALI NASSIR AS HEAD OF THE PRESIDENTIAL COUNCIL, AND HE NAMED MINISTER OF DEFENSE ALI ANTAR TO FULL MEMBERSHIP OF THE COUNCIL. ALI NASSIR, LIKE THE FORMER PRESIDENT, IS POPULAR WITH THE PEOPLE OUTSIDE OF ADEN, AND HIS APPOINTMENT WILL QUITE LIKELY HELP THE LESS POPULAR ISMAIL TO SHORE UP POPULAR BACKING

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 06 STATE 189938

IN THE RURAL AREAS. THE CURRENT LEADERSHIP IS EXPECTED TO CONTINUE PURGING HIGH-LEVEL SUPPORTERS OF THE FORMER PRESIDENT AND WILL MOST LIKELY ATTEMPT TO REACH AN ACCOMMODATION WITH THE GOVERNORATES. IN ANY CASE, CONSOLIDATION OF POWER WILL NOT OCCUR QUICKLY, AND THE STABILITY AND LONGEVITY OF THE ISMAIL REGIME REMAINS IN QUESTION. (SECRET/NOFORN) CHRISTOPHER

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SUMMARIES, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE189938
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: AAVACCARO:JVW
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X2
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780308-1178
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780713/aaaaakpz.tel
Line Count: 224
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: d225d76b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN INR
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: NOFORN
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NOFORN
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1864541
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: INTSUM 615 - JULY 27, 1978 LONDON FOR KINSOLVING PARIS FOR NICHOLAS MURPHY
TAGS: PINR, EG, IS, UN
To: SINAI
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/d225d76b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014